



July 11, 2014

The Honorable Thomas Wheeler
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Wheeler:

I write regarding the Commission's current rulemaking proposal to repeal the Sports Blackout Rule. I believe the NFL's stadium policies and the Commission's current broadcast rules work cooperatively to serve the interests of cities as well as the public by promoting live game attendance and the broadcast of professional football on free, over-the-air television.

Since 1992, public funds have helped to build or modernize twenty-nine of the NFL's thirty-two clubs' stadiums throughout the country. The stadiums, arenas and entertainment complexes are important sources of economic activity and civic pride. These public-private financing projects in turn have helped to create jobs and generate tax revenue for local communities. Third-party studies typically estimate that the annual economic impact of an NFL team, including its home stadium, exceeds \$100 million.

I have a civic and fiduciary responsibility to manage and maximize taxpayers' return on our stadium investments. I am a stakeholder in the NFL's policies and initiatives to promote game attendance and the in-stadium experience. My community benefits when thousands of fans attend games and our stadiums become the hub of community and business activity. Packed football stadiums create a community experience like no other event. Importantly, they also provide income for thousands of hospitality workers who benefit from a full stadium.

My constituents also benefit when NFL games are sold out and shown on free, over-the-air (OTA) broadcast television. A growing number of citizens, many of whom are low-income and minorities, depend exclusively on free TV for their news and entertainment, including NFL games. These fans are able to watch their local NFL team's games on free TV virtually all of the time.

The NFL is the only sports league that makes all games, both regular season and playoffs, available on free television. That's a big win for all fans, especially those who are on a fixed

Phone: 317.327.3601
Fax: 317.327.3980
TDD: 317.327.5186

Office of the Mayor
2501 City County Building
200 E. Washington Street
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204
www.indy.gov

July 11, 2014
Sports Blackout Rule
Page 2 of 2

income and cannot afford to pay for a subscription service. However, eliminating the Sports Blackout Rule puts the local broadcast model at risk and may cause sports leagues to move sports programming from free, OTA broadcast to pay television. Such a change would be detrimental to many in our communities.

I urge you to maintain the current broadcast rules that work for the NFL, our local communities, and football fans throughout the country. Eliminating these rules would upset a careful balance of interests, potentially depriving OTA-reliant viewers of programming and curbing returns on public-sector investments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Greg A. Ballard". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Greg" and last name "Ballard" clearly legible.

Gregory A. Ballard
Mayor
City of Indianapolis
Chair, Mayors' Professional Sports Alliance